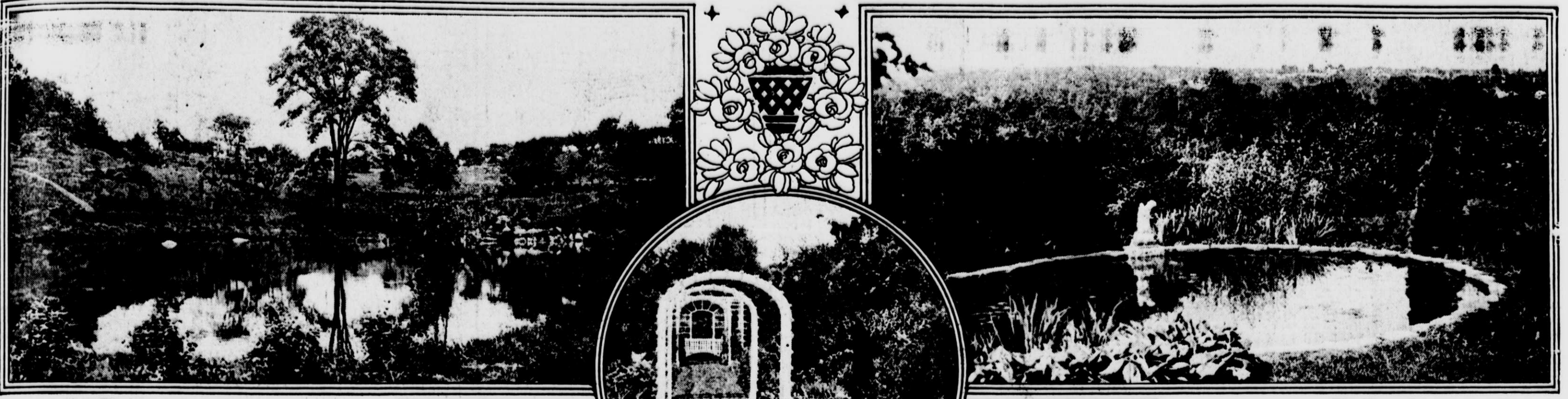


THE QUEST OF THE COUNTRY HOME AND ITS TRANSFORMATION



The lake at the beginning.

How One Couple Realized Their Ambition to Possess a Beautiful Place in the Westchester Hills

By MORTIMER J. FOX.

FOR two years we had spent our Saturdays and Sundays looking for our ideal of a country home. We wanted to buy a place with at the expense of a small fortune had already been developed by some semi-philanthropist who would be delighted to let us have it at our terms; or, failing that, to secure an old farmhouse which could readily be altered to fit in with our ideas. We had definitely decided against purchasing rough land and building our own home; it would be too expensive, troublesome and slow.

The quest for the completed place always ended either at a finished product that my wife laconically described as hideous or, if the place somewhat resembled our own rather decided ideas, with the discovery that the selfish, unoblivious owner was not willing to present it to us. As to the romantic sounding farmhouse, built so long ago that most of the timbers were rotten, the plumbing medieval, the ceilings too low and the house itself usually located in the wrong place, we fortunately realized in time that it was expensive and generally proved a disappointment.

Finally, after diligent search, we found a tract of land on one of the hills of Westchester county containing century old elm, oak and pine trees and commanding a magnificent view. We came to the conclusion that after all the only way to get what we wanted was to build and develop the place ourselves. Acquiring a finished place is never the same love as toward your own.

My wife now laid before the architect a few requirements upon which she insisted. All of the rooms must not only face the view, but also the prevailing summer breezes. Closets of all sizes, preferably large, were to be everywhere; every room was to have a big fireplace, with the possible exception of the butler's pantry. Sleeping porches were to be so felicitously designed that they would not mar but rather add to the general charm and lines of the building. The servants' department was to be generous, practical but unobtrusive.

All this was to be contained within two stories, so that the house would have that low, long, Dutch colonial effect; it was to be built so that it would be cool in summer and warm in winter. And just one thing more, she didn't want the house to have that brand new, epic and span appearance; she much preferred it to be old and though it had stood there for years.

The architect had his problem; it was for him to provide a proper and satisfactory solution. A double row of old, heavily leafed maples, fortunately spaced just far enough apart, at once settled the location of the entrance driveway which, bordered by great masses of deep red rhododendrons, leads to a portico and doorway at the rear. This leaves a unified front, laid out with terraces, and beyond a good sweep of lawn. A minimum of roadway was desirable, and the material of which it is composed, chosen in a first class, proved cheapest in the end, as the upkeep requires no attention whatever; most roads on private places demand the services of a man for life.

On the summit of a hill, with great trees to serve as a background, a natural site for the house was found. From here a broad undulating panorama opens out with distant hills and valleys extending as far as the eye can reach. As this splendid view was to the southwest it was possible to place all the important rooms toward the prevailing summer breezes. Two sleeping porches were designed, one at either end of the house, well screened and with shingled roofs having low overhanging eaves to serve as a shelter against the rain. The children's porch is surrounded by tall friendly pines.

The old, weather beaten effect of the exterior was accomplished by using the stone fences which had divided the plot into fields for pasture and hay. By splitting them, a fairly smooth face was obtained. The stones were in shade and color, the grays predominating, with here and there a touch of yellow and pink.

Laid upon the walls with wide rough stone joints, they present a varied texture of great charm, which is further softened by clinging vines and climbing purple wisteria. The color scheme of the exterior was completed with unstained white cedar roof shingles, soon turning to a dark silver gray, while the woodwork around windows and shutters was painted cream white.

The interior is simple and practical, creating an atmosphere which is homelike and livable. Instead of ornate porches all around the house, completely shutting out the sunlight,

the front was left unobstructed, giving a clear view from the dining and living rooms.

Each of these contains a large bay window, with ample glass area, framing the ever changing pictures of that incomparable artist Nature. Two spacious porches were planned at either end of the house; one serving as sun parlor and outdoor dining room, the other used as an open air living room. There is also a children's room and play porch with separate exterior entrance.

A broad, old fashioned Colonial stairway, well lighted by a carefully designed Palladian window, leads to the bedrooms on the floor above. These are of generous proportions, all the important ones have that much desired fireplace, where the crackling logs add comfort and cheer. The ground plan of the house is ell shaped, permitting the servants' quarters and kitchen department to be closed off from the main house.

All these rooms are contained within two stories, above which and running the whole length of the house is an attic, well lighted by many dormer windows, and so high and airy that the children, and at times their elders, use it as a roller skating rink.

The landscape architecture was not an afterthought, but it was studied as an integral part of the general problem from its inception. Most people mistakenly feel that it is better to do the planting of trees, flowers and shrubs from time to time. We on the contrary got as much as possible started at once, and have the satisfaction of seeing it all grow up together, free from vast bare acres that compel you to explain to every visitor your intentions for next year, and besides the young trees that were set out will have reached a considerable height in our lifetime, rather than that of our children or grandchildren.

As the ground sloped away from the house it was necessary to build a series of stone walls to retain the earth as the terrace and garden were levelled up; and in front of the lowest of these a great variety of flowering shrubs were planted. This dense mass of luxuriant vegetation blooming successively produces a constantly varied change of effect.

The main entrance of the house gives on to a broad level terrace, with rich green lawn which serves as a soft carpet, harmoniously blending its restful color with the texture of the stone walls. From here three sets of rough hewn stone steps lead to the various points of interest.

The main flight, on the axis with the entrance, descends to the terrace garden, where a lily pool was constructed, bordered with purple iris, deep red tulips, peonies and delicate snowy white flowering shrubs. Old trees provide grateful shade for the grass walks and secluded seats. Masses of quick growing vines and pink and white rambler roses against the long stone retaining wall form a charming background for the many varieties of flowers, kaleidoscope in effect as they burst forth in all their glory of color and bloom for a short period, only to be superseded by others equally beautiful.

We again descend by a few steps, follow a path which winds gently to the right, and soon reach a long old fashioned garden with a number of graceful wooden arches overhung with honeysuckle and roses; down the middle runs a grass path, along both sides of which to a distance of three feet is a wealth and variety of flowers from the low growing bells, geums and forget-me-nots to the vivid Oriental poppies, iris, canterbury bells and larkspurs, and as shelter and protection weigelia, mock orange and graceful Persian lilac bushes form the background with red leaf maples and lindens standing guard without. About midway the grass path widens into a

circle containing at one side a carved marble bird bath to attract these welcome guests, and opposite an inviting marble bench.

Through the young orchard we reach the vegetable garden, well underdrained with loose jointed clay pipes and protected from the north winds by Austrian pines, hemlocks and other evergreens. The combination garage and stable, with rooms above for the gardener's family, is close at hand, so that he can readily give the proper care and attention to the garden.

The one feature that the place lacked was a body of water, so we confidently set about making a lake. We began by building a deep heavy concrete retaining wall, gracefully curved in outline, to serve as a dam. Then the earth was scooped out from one side of the wall and carted around to the other, thus digging the lake and raising the level of the contour of the ground in one operation.

A gang of laborers with pick and shovel now started in different directions prospecting for springs. These were fortunately discovered on the hillside and led directly to the excavation, and as a final stroke of luck about a dozen bubbling embryo geysers were found right in the bed of what soon became a real lake.

A rocky was built at one end, near a stately elm, weeping willows and maples were placed at points of vantage and the banks planted with honeysuckle, marshmallows and rambler roses. Goldfish and perch now disport among the lilies in the water, while the children with hook and line industriously try to pull them out again.

The solution of the other water problem, the house supply for drinking and domestic purposes, I have kept for the last. We decided to bore an artesian well; all arrangements were made and the contractor was ready with his machine, but where was he to start drilling? Who could tell the best location for sinking the shaft, which would tap the mysterious hidden underground stream, lying deep and undetected in the bowels of the earth?

My wife suggested the services of a diving rod man, but I scouted the idea. It was too stupid and unscientific a method, so we selected a nice convenient spot ourselves, had the

machine set up and the drilling went merrily on. Down it went, further and further, through rock so hard it cost many a drill point, but no water. When the hole was more than 600 feet deep and still as dry as a prohibition lecture we decided to abandon it and try somewhere else, but again arose the question, where?

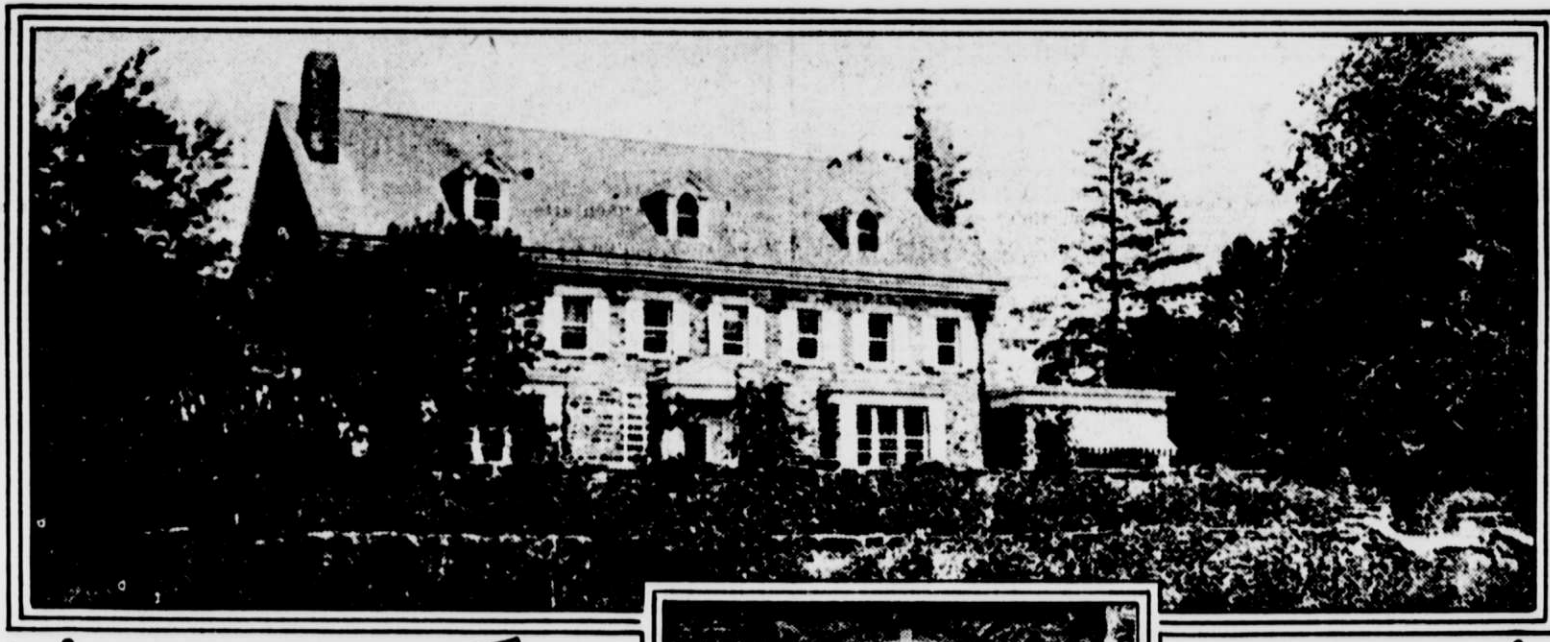
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The old fashioned garden.



The main entrance faces a broad level terrace.

ROUGH CAMPS IN THE WOODS.

ABOUT all the element of roughing it has been eliminated from camping and now a man may take his family into the woods with him and they will enjoy the experience just as much as he does.

Nevertheless, those who have never spent a season in a rough camp have missed one of the greatest joys of life. It is in an existence of this kind that the perspective of life is broadened. One becomes a philosopher and is happy as long as the blue sky is overhead and the green grass under foot.

To lie with relaxed muscles on the soft needle carpet and look up through the gently swaying branches of majestic pines at the irregular patches of sky beyond, dreaming away the hours, is one of the best nerve tonics in the world. The soft greenery of the forest is restful to the eye and mind and the balmy pine laden air neutralizes everything but the appetite. Here at the point of nature the veneer of civilization is cast aside and the camper becomes just himself. There is no room for make believe in this simple woods life, and it is surprising how delightful the majority of people are when the woods spirit gets them.

In every man's makeup there re-

Final Problem of Water Supply Settled by the Diving Rod Man After Drilling Had Failed

mains a trace of the cave man spirit, and at times he secretly yearns to try his skill, not only with but against nature. He would welcome a battle with the elements, a struggle against the tide, a matching of craft and cunning with some four footed monarch of the forest, or any effort into which he could bring to play the skill and ingenuity which he has inherited from his forebears.

Occasionally one hears of some one who goes to this life and, Adam fashion, takes nothing with him. This is an act of foolishness for one who has been accustomed to the conveniences of city life of the present day; but to go to the woods properly equipped for rough camping and prepared to lay aside all business cares and responsibilities is an act of wisdom that will tend to lengthen one's days.

If a man who wishes to take along members of his family has never been in rough camp it would be wise for him to employ a native guide, who will do all of the camp work, including the cooking, and who is willing to teach the woodcraft necessary to such a vacation. The second season the expense of the guide may be eliminated. For the man who has had experience in camping a guide is unnecessary, although a great comfort.

In many instances, especially if the trip is to be brief, a guide is an economy, for he may have a shack in the woods which can be used and he will furnish tents, boats and cooking utensils. A tent, however, is the most satisfactory abode in the woods, and a board floor is not always necessary to the itinerant camper. The best and driest floor is made of fine green hemlock boughs a foot deep. The delicious odor that comes from these boughs makes one's sleep refreshing. It is often possible to find a small covered with moss and pine needles that make a good floor and foundation for a bed.

Tent life in the Adirondacks is so delightful that even the rich man often has tents in connection with his elaborate camp and the art of sleeping in a simple apartment. The majority of camping grounds in the Adirondacks are adjacent to railroads which penetrate the very heart of the wilderness, yet, except for the shining tracks or the occasional whistle of the locomotive, there is little to remind one of the civilization which they bring to the very tent door.

In making a rough camp one of the most important things to consider is drinking water. The camp should be near clear water, where it comes out of the base of a hill and should at the same time be away from timber which might be uprooted in a wind storm.

The camp equipment is simple. Blankets are essential, as the Adirondack nights are cool, and often after the midday thermometer has registered 82 the evening will be cool enough for a camp fire to be welcome. A space should be cleared in front of the tent opening and the camp fire built so that its warmth will enter and make comfortable the tent. The cooking fire is smaller and separate.

Clothes should be plain, substantial and warm. Knickerbockers are the most practicable attire for the women of the party who make excursions away from the camp proper.

For the camp cooking fire there are usually provided two crocheted sticks about three feet in height. The sticks should be substantial and straight with a small V crotch in one end. These should be set in the ground in an upright position, so that a pole may be laid across them resting in the crotches. From this cross pole there should be wires to suspend the kettles and coffee pot over the flames, while an extra long handle of wood may be adjusted to the frying pan in order that one may cook the fish

and meat without cooking oneself at the same time. Tin plates are light and serviceable; tin cups and tin coffee pot with a long bail handle are required. There should be two frying pans, a kettle and a fair sized water pail. Every one turns in and helps the guide with the cooking, for the vigorous appetite which comes from the mountain air makes campers anxious to hurry up the meal.

Crocheted sticks similar to those for the cooking fire, only much higher, make an excellent clothes line upon which to air the camp bedding or dry the bathing suits after the morning plunge, while smaller crocheted sticks are nailed to trees and used for coat racks. With the aid of a good hunting knife, a hammer and some nails the handy man will make nearly all of the camp furniture.

The women of the party, not to be outdone, turn their talents to use and add much to the comfort and attractiveness of the camp. Even a rusty tomato can become a thing of beauty when wrapped in a silvery sheet of birchbark paper, which has been peeled from some fallen tree and then filled with graceful ferns which abound in the north woods.

Mushrooms, wild cranberries, raspberries, blueberries, fish, partridge or ruffed grouse, rabbits and venison in season are among the edibles that may be pilaged from the forest and add a refreshing dish to the woods dinner of bacon, bread and coffee or whatever thelander affords. A barrel of supplies is usually at a convenient distance from camp, so that one may procure meat, fresh vegetables and fruit. The convenient part of the woods appetite is that bacon and beans taste just as good here as does lobster in a Newburg at home.

The chief charm of this camp life is its freedom. The rough camper comes and goes at will. Often he who lies abed at home rises in the early misty hours of morning before the sun is yet up, and while others of the camp are blissfully sleeping he steals away to a pool to try his skill with the wary trout.

He breathes long and deep as he strides through the forest, but when he hears the pool his movements become cautious and stealthy. He creeps up and quietly drops his lure into the water. Perhaps there is no response. Then he carefully maneuvers his bait over nearer the submerged rock. There is a moment of suspense, then something flashes in the water with the swiftness and accuracy of a torpedo as the trout makes his dash for the tempting bait.

There is a tug, a quick responsive jerk by the angler, and then if the trout is hooked the battle royal begins. It takes all of the skill of the angler to land the trout and bring him to land dripping from the pool. At the end of an hour the angler starts back to camp and one knows the luck he has had by the way he whistles. By the time the rest of the family have arisen the trout are dressed and in the frying pan emitting savory odors. The angler feels the glory of conquest and knows that another good day has had a right beginning.

MUNICIPALLY OWNED MOVIES.

AFTER a vigorous campaign led by women the Norwegian Diet has passed a law according to which the licenses of all moving picture theatres will expire next year. Then the municipalities will have the choice of running the theatres or renewing the licenses to private parties. Several towns—Vardo, Notodden, Fredrickshald and Tromsø—have signified their intention of municipalizing their moving picture theatres. Several of the larger cities have the same plan under advisement.

Trondheim has notified the owners of the theatres that it will not assume control of theatres until 1918. Then the Mayor proposes for the municipality to maintain only two large theatres. While this is a new move on the part of the Norwegian Government, in Germany the moving picture companies have been under Government control for quite a long time. Ten per cent. of every ticket sold is paid to the Kaiser. In Sweden and Norway the Government has made extensive use of the motion picture in popularizing the extension work of Government universities.

Only in America, England, the Latin countries and in the Far East has the management of moving picture theatres been allowed to remain in the hands of private investors and stock companies. It is estimated that New York city would have an income of \$4,000 a day if the moving picture theatres were required to pay the same tax they pay in Germany.



One of the attractive doorways.



Climbing vines soften effect of stonework.



A double row of maples settled question of the driveway.



View from the terrace.

sparkling water has solved the last problem of an interesting experience and brings to a close the story of our country house.

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The clamor for the diving rod expert became more insistent. Well, we could only guess; very well let him do the guessing.

A rather awkward farmerlike looking person answered the call. With bare feet he proceeded to meander over the place, grasping a Y shaped green twig in both hands. Suddenly it started to move and pointed downward.

"This is the place to establish the well," said he. "Two underground streams cross at this point 250 feet below the surface; drill here and you will get at least twenty-five gallons of water a minute as long as you live."

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